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HARVARD
COLLEGE
LIBRARY

Þorhallur Bjarnason
Reykjavík.

TESTIMONIALS

IN FAVOUR OF

MR. JÓN A. HJALTALÍN,

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN IN THE ADVOCATES' LIBRARY,
EDINBURGH,

AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE

OFFICE OF PRINCIPAL LIBRARIAN

TO THE

SOCIETY OF WRITERS TO HER MAJESTY'S SIGNET,
EDINBURGH.

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HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
IN MEMORY OF
WILLIAM HENRY SCHOFIELD
APRIL 6, 1931

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To the Honourable the Society of Writers to Her Majesty's Signet.

GENTLEMEN,

I venture to offer myself as a Candidate for your vacant Librarianship.

I have been seven years Assistant Librarian in the Advocates' Library, and have just completed a Catalogue of Printed Books in that Library. With regard to my qualifications, and how I have discharged my duties, I beg to refer to the accompanying Testimonials. I have only to add that, if you appoint me your Librarian, I shall do my best to fulfil my duties to your satisfaction.

I have the honour to be,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient Servant,

JÓN A. HJALTALÍN.

ADVOCATES' LIBRARY,
EDINBURGH, 30*th November* 1878.

TESTIMONIALS.

I.—From Patrick Fraser, Esq., LL.D., Advocate, Dean of Faculty.

Edinburgh, 19th November 1878.

Mr. J. A. Hjaltalín was recommended to the Faculty of Advocates in the year 1872 as being a scholar very competent to assist in editing the Catalogue of the Faculty Library, the preparation and printing of which having then been resolved on. Coming with such recommendations, Mr. Hjaltalín's services were at once engaged by the Faculty. He edited the Catalogue under the superintendence of the Keeper of the Library down to the letter L; but during the last three years he has been sole editor, and has now brought to a conclusion this laborious undertaking.

The manner in which this work has been performed does infinite credit to his learning and his industry. The Catalogue is the most complete and accurate Catalogue of any Library of the second class (in point of number) that has been ever printed; and it is not saying more than what is due to the editor, when it is added, that had the Faculty of Advocates not secured his services they would not have attained a Catalogue—dealing as it does with books in many languages—so accurate and so useful, and certainly not within the time which it has occupied him to complete it.

I have a high opinion of Mr. Hjaltalín's qualifications as a business man. His knowledge of books is very great; but besides this, he has practical administrative abilities of such an order for the management of a Library, that I consider him in every way well fitted for being put in charge of such an Institution.

PATRICK FRASER.

II.—From the CURATORS of the ADVOCATES' LIBRARY.

Advocates' Library,
15th November 1878.

The Curators of the Advocates' Library have much pleasure in stating that Mr. Jón A. Hjaltalín has been employed for upwards of seven years as an Assistant in that Library, and specially in superintending the printing of the Library Catalogue from the letter C, and the two last volumes have been entirely edited by him. He has discharged his duties with great ability, and to their entire satisfaction.

In the name and by authority of the Curators,

J. PETTIGREW WILSON,
Chairman.

III.—From JAMES T. CLARK, Esq., Keeper of the Advocates' Library.

Advocates' Library,
Edinburgh, 26th November 1878.

I can with every confidence add my testimony to Mr. Hjaltalín's peculiar fitness for discharging the varied and responsible duties of a Librarian.

Having for the last seven years been closely associated with him in the practical work of this Library, I have had the best opportunities of knowing that he possesses extensive and accurate bibliographical information, that he is imbued with a real love of books, that his linguistic and literary attainments are of a very high order, that he is most courteous and obliging in disposition, and methodical and persevering in the discharge of his duties.

The fact that Mr. Hjaltalín has now brought to a successful completion the Catalogue of the printed books in this Library, begun by the late Mr. Halkett, is in itself a high testimonial to his scholarship, knowledge of cataloguing, and perseverance.

J. T. CLARK.

IV.—From the Right Hon. LORD GORDON of Drumearn.

Grand Hotel, Pau, Basses Pyrenées, France,
November 20, 1878.

Dear Mr. Hjaltalín—I received your letter of the 14th intimating that you are a candidate for the vacant Librarianship of the Signet Library, and requesting my recommendation for the appointment.

I do not know who the competitors are, but I have much pleasure in expressing the great satisfaction I experienced from the very successful manner in which you assisted in preparing the Catalogue of the Advocates' Library—which I am glad to find is now completed, and considered a work highly creditable to all concerned. I am sure that the late Dean of Faculty, Mr. Horn, would, if spared, have given a very strong testimony of his estimate

of the merits of your labours in connection with the Catalogue.

I recollect being astonished at the accuracy with which you made the arrangements and dealt with a foreign literature; but, owing to your perfect knowledge of our language, to you these were no difficulties.

I would also gladly speak to the agreeable and obliging manner with which your duties were discharged.—Yours very truly,

GORDON OF DRUMEARN.

J. A. Hjaltalín, Esq.

V.—From the Hon. LORD RUTHERFURD-CLARK, LL.D.

17 *Great Stuart Street, Edinburgh,*
15*th November* 1878.

Dear Sir—I have to acknowledge your letter, in which you say that you are a candidate for the Librarianship of the Signet Library. If you succeed, I am sure that the Society will obtain an excellent Librarian.

I know you have rendered great service to the Library of the Faculty of Advocates, and I believe you have given the highest satisfaction to the Faculty during the time you have been connected with that Library.—Yours very truly,

AND. R. CLARK.

J. A. Hjaltalín, Esq.

VI.—From the Right Hon. WILLIAM WATSON, LL.D., Lord Advocate.

Lord Advocate's Chambers, Parliament Square,
Edinburgh, 21*st November* 1878.

As a member and, for some time, as Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, I have had ample opportunity of

becoming acquainted with Mr. Hjaltalín's qualifications; and I have much pleasure in expressing my conviction that his well-known literary attainments, coupled with his experience in our Library, eminently fit Mr. Hjaltalín for the vacant Librarianship of the Signet Library.

W. WATSON.

VII.—From JAMES LORIMER, Esq., M.A., Advocate, Professor of Public Law in the University of Edinburgh.

1 *Bruntsfield Crescent*, 25*th November* 1878.

It is with much pleasure that I have learned that Mr. Hjaltalín is a candidate for the office of Librarian to the Society of the Writers to the Signet. Mr. Hjaltalín is one of those earnest, untiring, and cheerful scholars whom one scarcely finds, except among the northern races of Europe; and the fact that he has come scatheless through the work of framing a Catalogue for the Advocates' Library, which has proved fatal to more than one of his colleagues, is itself an argument for his appointment to an office which will involve similar labour.

I have the very highest opinion of Mr. Hjaltalín's general ability and acquirements, and the only objection which I can imagine to his appointment is, that not being a Scotchman, he can scarcely be supposed to possess that intimate acquaintance with Scottish history and antiquities which might be expected in the successor to Dr. Laing. But Dr. Laing can have no successor of equal merit in this respect, and Mr. Hjaltalín has devoted himself to these studies with so much industry during his now protracted residence amonst us, as already to take an important place

in the younger generation of Scottish archæologists. It is to be borne in mind, moreover, that a very close relation subsists between our own earlier history and that of Scandinavia, and that as a Scandinavian scholar Mr. Hjaltalín possesses the advantage of being altogether a specialist.

On these grounds I believe that Mr. Hjaltalín's appointment to this office would be a fortunate event not only to the Society of Writers to the Signet, but to the literary society of Edinburgh.

J. LORIMER.

VIII.—From ÆNEAS J. G. MACKAY, Esq., Advocate, LL.B., Professor of History in the University of Edinburgh.

7 Albyn Place, Edinburgh,
30th October 1878.

Gentlemen—I have known Mr. Jón A. Hjaltalín since he came to Edinburgh eight years ago. During part of that time I was one of the Curators of the Advocates' Library in which Mr. Hjaltalín has been an Assistant Librarian since 1871, and I have had good opportunities for observing his assiduous attention to the duties and special qualifications for all parts of the work of a Librarian. Latterly he has been employed in the completion of the Catalogue of the Advocates' Library begun by the late Mr. Halkett; and Mr. Robert Horn, the late Dean of Faculty, more than once mentioned to me his satisfaction with the manner in which Mr. Hjaltalín performed that laborious piece of work. The preparation of the Catalogue has necessarily given Mr. Hjaltalín an acquaintance with the books in the different departments of English literature, and some knowledge of what are the works on law chiefly

consulted by Scotch lawyers. He is a good linguist, with a thorough knowledge of the Scandinavian languages, and a knowledge of French and German more than sufficient for Library purposes. Although a foreigner by birth, he has a complete command of English. Should it be the pleasure of the Society of Writers to the Signet to appoint him to the office of their Librarian, I am confident they will never have reason to regret their choice.—I am, Gentlemen, your obedient Servant,

Æ. J. G. MACKAY.

The Library Committee of the
Society of Writers to the Signet.

IX.—From ALEXANDER GIBSON, Esq., M.A., Advocate.

12 *Northumberland Street,*
Edinburgh, 10*th November* 1878.

I have known Mr. Hjaltalín for some years, and am glad to testify to his fitness for Library work. Since he has been employed in the Advocates' Library I have had good opportunities of judging of his capacity for that kind of occupation, and have no doubt that he would give great satisfaction in any situation of the kind. He has the advantage of being an exceedingly good linguist. His work, especially with regard to the preparation of the Catalogue, must have given him a very extensive bibliographical knowledge. He is extremely obliging in his manners and disposition, and his habits of conducting business are orderly and methodical. He would be much missed in his present position, and would, I have no doubt, fill exceedingly well the situation he is applying for.

ALEX. GIBSON.

X.—From JAMES BRYCE, Esq., D.C.L., Professor of Civil Law in the University of Oxford.

Lincoln's Inn, London,
8th November 1878.

It gives me great pleasure to bear witness to the very high qualifications of Mr. Jón A. Hjaltalín for the office of Librarian to the Society of Writers to the Signet, for which I understand that he is a candidate. He has not only a wide acquaintance with books, Scandinavian and German as well as English, but is extremely thorough and methodical in all that he undertakes, zealous and conscientious in the discharge of his duties at the Advocates' Library (where I have had occasion to be indebted to his kindness and help), and with literary, philological, and historical interests which would make his advice valuable to the managing committee of a great Library.

It is hardly necessary to add that he is sincerely respected and liked by all, so far as I know, who have the pleasure of his acquaintance.

J. BRYCE.

XI.—From the Rev. JOHN LAING, Librarian to the New College, Edinburgh.

Edinburgh, 26th November 1878.

I have great pleasure in bearing my testimony to Mr. Hjaltalín's qualifications for filling the office and discharging with efficiency the duties of a Librarian. His first connection with the Advocates' Library as one of the senior assistants gave him a most favourable opportunity of acquiring a general knowledge of its contents and the

modes of its management, which are essential to the successful discharge of a Librarian's duties. Mr. Hjaltalín's linguistic attainments are an additional and important element in his favour; while his long connection with the Catalogue, to which he has, for the last six years, exclusively devoted himself, has not only brought him into contact with the larger portion of the Advocates' Library, but has given him great skill and readiness in one of the most important and difficult departments of work connected with a Librarian's duties.

JOHN LAING,
Acting Librarian, New College.

XII.—From JOHN SMALL, Esq., M.A., Librarian of University Library, Edinburgh.

26th October 1878.

I have much pleasure in bearing my testimony to the merits of Mr. Jón Hjaltalín, and to my knowledge of the great amount of literary work he has done during his residence in this country.

Mr. Hjaltalín came to England in 1866, and for the last seven years, while in Edinburgh, has been engaged in preparing the Catalogue of the books in the very extensive Library of the Faculty of Advocates.

The experience he has thus acquired in performing perhaps the most important part of Library work, in addition to his knowledge of foreign languages, eminently qualifies him for the office of a Librarian.

I may also add that Mr. Hjaltalín possesses that perseverance and love of work which are essential to the satisfactory performance of all public duties.

JOHN SMALL, M.A.

XIII.—From JOSEPH ANDERSON, Esq., Keeper of the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

26th October 1878.

I have much pleasure in bearing testimony to the character and attainments of Mr. Jón A. Hjaltalín.

He has been engaged for the last six years on the Catalogue of the Advocates' Library here, which is now completed; and from the experience thus gained of the details of the arrangement, classification, and general working of a great public Library, as well as from his extensive knowledge of bibliography and general literature, especially in the Old Northern departments, I consider him specially qualified for the practical superintendence of any similar institution that may require his services.

From these qualifications, accompanied as they are by integrity of character, obliging manners, and methodical habits, I should expect him to fill such a situation with credit to himself and satisfaction to his employers.

JOSEPH ANDERSON.

XIV.—From Dr. J. A. CARLYLE.

The Hill, Dumfries,
12th January 1876.

Mr. Jón A. Hjaltalín has been known to me for several years past, and I can testify that he is a well-educated man, has extensive knowledge of books, and is acquainted with several of the leading modern languages, and habitually punctual, diligent, energetic, and faithful in all that he undertakes.

J. A. CARLYLE.

XV.—From GEORGE BULLEN, Esq., Keeper of Printed Books in the British Museum.

21st January 1876.

My dear Sir—It gives me great pleasure to add my testimony to that of others with respect to your learning and talents. When you were in the habit of attending the reading-room a few years ago I had frequent opportunities of noticing your great love of books, and I have no doubt that since you have been engaged at the "Advocates" you have made great progress in bibliography.—Believe me, yours very truly,

GEO. BULLEN.

J. A. Hjaltalín, Esq.

XVI.—From TH. AUFRECHT, M.A., LL.D., formerly Professor of Sanscrit in the University of Edinburgh, and now Professor of Comparative Philology in the University of Bonn.

Bonn, 11th January 1876.

Since his arrival in Edinburgh Mr. Hjaltalín has been intimately known to me, and I always valued him both on account of his sterling character and his manifold acquirements. He possesses a scholar-like knowledge of the northern languages, and has published several excellent treatises on the customs and antiquities of Iceland. German and French he speaks with great ease, and he has passed through a classical education. I consider him admirably fitted for the management of a great Library.

TH. AUFRECHT.

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